

Advice to the Freeholders

K. Hibernicus

OF

I R E L A N D;

Concerning the present Elections.

Inscrib'd to the Rt. Honourable -----

*Iustum & tenacem proposito virum
Non Civium Ardor prava jubentium
Non vultus instantis Tyranni,
Mente quatit solida.*

Hor.



MY LORD,

I Hope Your generous Nature will be a sufficient reason of excuse for my Presumption in *Addressing your Lordship after this manner*; but, be assur'd, I am prompted thereto by no other Motive than an unfeigned Zeal for *the general Good of My Country*. And, as all sublunary Things are subject to the vicissitudes of Fortune, I was uncertain how soon Your Lordship might be Call'd before a noble Assembly of those *unbiass'd Arbitrators of Justice*, who, I fear, will undoubtedly oblige Your Lordship to render a faithful Account of *that mighty and important Trust His Majesty has been pleas'd to repose in You*, which, I hope, You will effect to the satisfaction of those whom it so nearly concerns. You will find the following Lines writ upon a Subject, which, I thought, wou'd not be altogether indifferent to You; and if my poor Endeavours have the good success to meet with Your Lordship's Approbation, and in the least to contribute to the *service of my Country*, I have attain'd the utmost height of my Ambition.

AS it is an indispensable Duty incumbent on every Subject who has the Welfare of *Ireland* sensibly at Heart, to endeavour its *Preservation*,

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so is it necessary, that every true-spirited Person, upon the least Occasion, should at all times excite in each Heart a generous Emulation of becoming true Patriots for the Glory of their Country. And, as at this Time, there happens a noble Opportunity of exerting their Zeal, by the many Vacancies in the Honourable House of Commons in this Kingdom, so it is to be hop'd they will unanimously endeavour, in the present Elections, to promote such GENTLEMEN, whose Virtues alone, render Them worthy so great an Honour exclusive of all other Motives; since the sole Right and Power of chusing MEMBERS proper to fill up these Vacancies is entirely invested in the Freeholders of Ireland: For how often, and in how many cases have the greater part, or more unthinking People of this Kingdom, by their Inadvertancy, and for want of exercising that Reason, which distinguishes them from Brutes, run precipitately into Misfortunes, out of which they have found it but too difficult to extricate themselves! and yet so far have they contemn'd all manner of Admonition, that they have not only spurn'd at the whollome Counsel which might have preserv'd Them, but even for a grateful Reward of their Labours have shamefully revil'd and abus'd their generous ADVISERS. This it is which should deter Men from exercising their Talents for the benefit of the Publick, were it not for the necessity every Man Zealous in his Country's Interest, thinks himself under to prevent, if possible, any Abuses which may happen, but more particularly upon the pressing Occasions which now offer to Us, when the endangering or preserving our Lives and Fortunes, and the security of our Rights and Privileges wholly depend on our own Inclinations.

First then, it is absolutely necessary for those persons who have a Right to give their Voices, to consider seriously what they are about to do; and that they are not going to Vote for a Mayor, Sheriff, Port-reve, Bailiff, or any other such inferior Officer, whose continuance in his Office is but for a certain limited Time, when they have it again in their power, if they have been wrong'd, to do themselves Justice by another Choice; but they are going, by their Majority of Voices, to create a MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, who is to continue so, perhaps, for his whole Life, and who by his Good or Bad Principles may either prejudice or benefit those very persons who conferr'd that Dignity on him, without

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without being capable of helping Themselves; since he is not only an immediate Representative of the entire Body of the County, City or Burrough for which he is Elected, as well of the richer as the poorer sort, but also the *only Person* in whom they repose their whole Confidence for the protection of their *Rites*, and the redressing their *Grievances* by his Representation of Them to that *Honourable House*, of which they have made him a Member. How cautious then every reasonable thinking Man ought to be in the choice of such a Person, I leave him to consider, since, by an abuse of that Power they have invested him with, he may be a means of their Destruction.

Secondly, they are throughly to know the Person they Vote for, by a diligent enquiry into his Life and Character, that it may not be in the power of Friends or Interest to impose upon them; since no Man is proper for so important a Trust, so high a Dignity, and worthy to Sit in so august an Assembly of the brightest Men in the Kingdom, but a Gentleman of a good Fortune, of a solid sound Judgment, a penetrating Wit, and of known Integrity in each circumstance of his Life; unbiass'd in his Principles, a firm *Protestant*, and a Lover of his Country, of which his riper Years have given sufficient Testimony, least by a choice of a contrary person, that Honourable House, which was design'd for our Security, should be fill'd with young unexperienc'd Members to our ruin.

In all Cases of *Elections* in this Kingdom, it has been a laudable Custom for the *Candidates*, with their utmost Ingenuity, to promote themselves by all the Interest they could possibly make, either by Bribes, Threats or Friendship: But, how poor, how base, and how despicable it is for a Gentleman to supply the defects of his Merit, by having recourse to such little mean Artifices, in order to raise himself to that Honour, which *without them his Country would not have decreed him!* it is but a too manifest proof that his aim is no other than his own private Interest exclusive of the *publick Good*; when on the other Hand, how noble, how generous, and if I may be allow'd the expression, how Godlike would it appear in him *to rely purely on the Love of his Country*, which just Resignation would plainly shew him Disinterested, and that his Intentions were entirely for the benefit of his Fellow-Subjects.

How

How common may we see a Man of a good Estate walk at the Head of a great number of his Tenants, *whose Voices he has unjustly procured for his Friend, (tho' undeserving) by Threats, or by Promises,* which he no more regards when his Ends are answer'd, and has so firmly tied them to his Interest by such indirect Means, *contrary to the Liberty and Property of every Free-born Subject, that they dare not refuse their Votes to a person whom their own Consciencies tell them is unworthy, and whom they would certainly have been against were it not for incurring the Displeasure of their Oppulent Landlord?*

We may also see Others less considerate than these I have mentioned, who for a small Treat, or a trifling sum of Money, shall not only sell his own Voice, but as many of his Friends and Acquaintances as he can possibly muster up, without the least Consideration or Thought of what he is doing, or knowledge of the person he Votes for, but is content at any rate to sell his Right just as he would his Horse to the highest Bidder. Degenerate unthinking Wretches! who not satisfy'd to sell their own Freedom, which all reasonable Men so much labour after, but do even strive to plunge their nearest Friends and Relations into the same Destruction, without the least reflection beyond their present sordid Gain : But this is an Evil so universal among many, that it seems ingrafted in their very Nature.

'Tis therefore to be hop'd, that every Person who has a Vote in this Kingdom, and is conscious to himself that he is or has been guilty of any of those ignominious Practices, will maturely examine and look into himself for the future, in order to correct these Abuses, and not suffer himself any longer to be on a level or rather worse than those Animals which Heaven has been pleas'd to make him Lord over; and that by a manly Resolution, worthy the noble Form he assumes, he may avoid such Enormities, and become a loyal Assertor of his Privileges, and an honour to his Country. I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's

6 DE 58 Most humble Servant,

Hibernicus.